2: Courlander B-S (1937-1955) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

Levoute's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*.*
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine.
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-nose" †
Ask Oreste and Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon said before he left
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du Fond, I heard of the Mapou Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mapou Dauphine
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Bowl covers bowl, ‡ Antoine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Juste and Delphin,
Ducasse and Corvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

Two more presidents—Tancrede Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Davilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor cacos first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réform" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered:

Attention la Réform c'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince,
C'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince, la Réform viré dos ba yo.
Yo lèvé Mardi bon matin, l'habillé tout en blanc,
L'habillé tout en blanc pou' y'al entré Charles Zamor.
Al entren Port-au-Prince la Réform débordé,
La Réform débordé, la Réform viré dos ba yo.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Davilmar Théodore's cacos were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

* A violent purgative.
† That is, upset stomach, hand on the nose.
‡ That is, force replies to force.

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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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about Haitian society.* It does not, however, take note of the remarkable failure of foreign experts to make any adequate assessment of the potentialities of that society, or of its most-needed changes. Some of the problems of development, remarked on by Leyburn in 1941, have never even been explored adequately: the advisability of primary education in Creole; the need for an effective agricultural extension; the relationship of nutrition to work habits; and the like. Even basic sociological studies of a sort that could provide data for planned change are lacking—"of the process of socialization . . . of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses . . . of social mobility" (pp. 308–09). Foreign-inspired development projects have been, for the most part, crash projects, designed to satisfy Haitian political goals, rather than economic or social goals. A productive relationship between foreign development agency representatives and government officials has never been achieved, nor have the failures ever been subjected to analysis or reflection. Emphasis has been put on large-scale schemes, rather than on more modest, long-term programs which would require actual cooperation with the rural masses on the local level (cf. Erasmus, 1952; Friedmann, 1955; De Young, 1958). Many—probably most—foreign planners who have worked in Haiti have never even bothered to learn the national language, let alone the fundamentals of the culture of the Haitian people.

In these terms, it is not enough merely to bemoan the feeble institutional structure of Haiti. Some attention, at least, should be given to the striking incapacity of outsiders to deal with that structure creatively. Leyburn's book exacts our respect precisely because its author, unlike most foreign visitors, makes plain that he takes Haiti, and the needs of the Haitian people, seriously.

* Some observers are less pessimistic than the writer. The sons of the elite, many of them educated abroad, elements of a Social Christian progressive movement, and possibly a few "Castro-left" radicals, may eventually coalesce into a successful opposition, it has been argued. The writer, however, remains unconvinced. Structural changes of the sort wrought by the Castro regime in Cuba were predicated on the existence of mass political opposition to Batista-type governments, and on the existence of industrial and rural proletarian sectors organized into large-scale movements. These "preconditions," as I see them, are entirely lacking in Haiti of today.

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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue.

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste.

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities.

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that *all* men are created free and equal.

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IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

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Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, excellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their campaign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement produced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

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[643] [59]

1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years.

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique.

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government.

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship.

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reflection, some six years with no reflection.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *cacos* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines.

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one: The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti.

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them.

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise wielded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névroses* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dumai Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Ponthieux, Dorsainville Dautant.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

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lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

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True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

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Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

175 643

It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).